AFFORDABLE HOUSING?



A BROKEN HEARTED PROMISE!

Housing Speak Out

A Public Hearing On Affordable Housing
In The City Of Newark

St. Patricks Pro-Cathedral School Auditorium
Newark, New Jersey

December 3, 1994

Printing compliments of Chemical Bank New Jersey NA



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Introduction

During the 1994-95 holiday season, while many people were celebrating with parties and festive meals, many others were worrying about where their next month's rent payment would come from, how to keep their children warm in a building without heat, or where they can find a home their family can afford.

Many of these issues were raised at the *Housing Speak Out* held on Saturday, December 3, 1994. Over one hundred persons attended this event held at St. Patrick's Pro-Cathedral in Newark. The *Speak Out* grew out of an initiative led by the Affordable Housing Network of NJ to bring together groups and individuals in the Newark area concerned about affordable housing issues. The *Speak Out* was jointly sponsored by the **Affordable Housing Network of NJ, the HUD Tenants' Coalition, Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing**, and the **Newark Community Development Network**.

The most important issues were:

- The deepening need for affordable housing. One non-profit developer involved in building 13 units for low income residents spoke about receiving 400 applications for those units.
- A number of speakers called for passage of the *Jobs and Housing Initiative*, a statewide program sponsored by the Affordable Housing Network of NJ, to create new housing and jobs. A summary of this initiative is attached to this report.
- Essex County's estimate of its homeless population is 32,000 for 1994. Concerns were raised about the need for more shelter space (as well as permanent housing rather than welfare motels), job training for the homeless, and representation by homelss persons on governing bodies which determine policy for the homeless. The impact of homelessness on children and the lack of decent foster care, should this population increase, was also raised.
- Several speakers called for reform in the housing courts, citing the long delays between inspection, court dates, and re-inspection, in which needed repairs go uncorrected. The lack of sufficient monies for housing inspectors, at every level of government, was also discussed.
- A number of concerns were raised about impending cuts in the housing and entitlement budget. (One specific example was S1175, calling for the cut off of Temporary Rental Assistance after a 12 month period). Since the *Speak Out*, details of proposals to reshape the department of Housing and Urban Development raise many serious concerns about the survival of HUD-assisted programs such as Section 8. Some of this information is attached to this report.
- Non-profit housing developers spoke on the need for additional funds in order to make housing available to those who are truly neediest, and streamlining the permits and paperwork to make the process quicker.
- The importance of maintaining a strong local rent control law in the face of threats in surrounding towns and statewide was mentioned several times. Tenants also advocated making the law stronger and closing loopholes.
- Concerns about the lack of security and drugs in buildings, lead poisoning, lack of repairs, poor building management, and failure to provide services tenants pay rent for, were numerous. Speakers called for the preservation of buildings which house low income residents through strict code enforcement, enforcing the laws which already exist, capable and professional management, and tenant involvement. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, the state's New

Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, and other departments at the County and City level must be held accountable for the role they play in allowing properties to deteriorate. A copy of the Newark HUD Tenants' Coalition 1994 building conditions survey and Plan of Action for their buildings is attached.

- Continued monitoring of the court settlement on public housing, and continuing to organize tenants in public housing to speak out, especially given changes at the federal level which may eliminate construction of new public housing.
- Enforcing fair housing laws in suburban communities.
- Numerous speakers talked about the need for people to organize, to learn their rights, to make their voices heard, whether it is with a manager, an agency, or policy makers who shape federal, state and local housing policies. Tenants who organized in their buildings reported victories.

A panel of representatives of influential civic and church organizations was invited to listen to testimony and commit themselves and their groups to take appropriate action. Panel members included:

Susie M. McGhee,
President, NAACP

Sister Cathy Daly
Director of Social Ministries, Catholic Community Services

David Weiner
President, CWA Local 1081

Jeanette Page-Hawkins
Executive Director, Newark Emergency Services For Families

Michaelene Loughlin
Director, Seton Hall Center for Social Justice

David Stephens
Urban League of Essex County

Rev. Judy Vasile
United Church of Christ

The *Speak Out* was an initial step in a process to try to make the growing need for affordable housing a priority with our elected officials. The organizations who participated in it will continue to work together towards this goal.

Richard Cammarieri, Newark Coalition of Neighborhoods, Moderator:

Today's housing speak out will continue as they have in the past. We want to get testimony from people regarding just what their housing problems are on an individual basis. We want to collect this testimony to create an action agenda that we can use to take some 'action'. We don't want to be doing this year after year.

This is not an event, this is part of a process. An event happens one time and everyone goes home. A process is something that we continue so we can accomplish something.

We have had some successes, but we need a lot more because of the seriousness of the housing problems we face in Newark. Housing isn't the only problem we have in Newark. We need to be having some Job Speak Outs too. That's another day and another organization.

30 people have signed up to testify today. We have a panel of reviewers who are listening to what you are saying. They are here to listen. At the end of the program, they will make their own comments. We are hoping to leave here today with an action agenda that everyone can sign onto. This is not an event. This is part of a process. An event happens one time and everyone goes home. A process is something that we continue so we can accomplish something. I'm hoping that we will.

As most of you know, housing has a lot of issues and a lot of areas. There are issues related to housing involving the city, the county, the state, and the federal level. That is why we have invited several elected officials. They are: Councilpersons Mildred Crump and Luis Quintana and Congressman Donald Payne. We don't know who will show up. Invited panelists include Jeanette Page-Hawkins, Newark Emergency Services For Families, Michaelene Loughlin, Seton Hall Center for Social Justice, David Stephens, Urban League of Essex County, Sister Catherine Daly, Catholic Community Services, David Weiner, Local 1081, Communication Workers of America, Junior League of Montclair-Newark, Jacqueline Lawrence, NAACP, Reverend Judy Vasile, United Church of Christ.

Try to be as concise as possible. Go from the individual, but try to relate it to something collective, because we're here to take a look at the big picture and carve out some solutions.

Frank Hutchins, HUD Tenants' Coalition:

I'm here today, and we have been here for a number of years. We choose this particular time of the year to hold this *Speak Out* primarily because it is between the Thanksgiving season, when we should be thankful for being and living, and Christmas because we hope it is a season when people's hearts will be kinder, especially those people who make policy which affects our lives.

I stand here at this time after I've just come back from Atlantic City at a Head Start conference. I think about the recent election which has just taken place. I hear about the "Contract with America." I'm concerned because it seems as though this contract has nothing to do with those of us who are disadvantaged, who are poor, or disabled, and has nothing to do with what we have come to know as entitlement programs.

We need to be concerned. If there was ever a time we needed to organize, it is now. I am encouraged by the number of people I see.

It appears that the nation, the new representatives recently elected, have determined that they are going to cut. Did they decide to cut the

corporations? No! It is poor people that they have decided that caused the deficit that this country is in. Well I think not!

We need to be concerned. If there was ever a time we needed to organize, it is now! I am encouraged by the number of people I see here today. We need to double or triple this amount within the very near future because there are hard times a coming. I think about the number of buildings that we deal with. Garden Spires is a building located in the Central Ward, and this past summer, and probably up until now, has been inundated with crime, with shoot-outs in the early morning, 10 AM in the morning, 3 in the afternoon when the children are coming home, and there has been no help for them. I could go on about any number of buildings. Garden Spires is just one of many.

You certainly all know about Hill Manor and the problems there. There are multiple kinds of problems and they've been continuing. I'm going to finish with a story which sums it up for me. They say there was a farmer that had a jackass. The jackass wanted a drink of water. He walked over and looked into the well. While he was looking in, he fell in. When the farmer came over, he found the jackass in the well crying for help.

The farmer said to the jackass, "You're a dumb jackass, because you fell into the well." The jackass said, "No, I'm an inquisitive jackass." The farmer said, "I think you're dumb, and because I think you're dumb, I'm going to leave you in there." And so he started to throw dirt on the jackass. Every time he threw dirt down on the jackass, the jackass would shake it off, and step on it. As that continued and continued, the jackass was finally able to walk out of the well. I'm telling you this story because I'm saying to you, don't let people throw their dirt on you. Shake it off and step on it.

Rich: *This contract with America sounds more like a contract on America.*

Jacqueline Brown, Tenant:

I have been a resident of Newark all my life. I do know what it is to be homeless, because I was unfortunately in that situation with my 3 daughters. I've moved to 18th Avenue and 20th Street as a result of coming out of the homeless shelter. It wasn't so great but I had to bear with it. I was able to move to affordable housing, thank God, with my 3 daughters. We're struggling and the future looks a lot brighter now. Various organization have helped us out. From Council people, Tri-City, from DYFS, anybody I could speak to I went to ask for help. I'm sure I was very lucky to get assistance so quickly. I thank God. I hope someone else will be as fortunate as I am.

Rich: *We should try to find out some of the organizations which are out there to help us.*

Lenny Robbins, Unified Vailsburg Services Organization:

I feel that the issue of housing and jobs is important. Where I am starting from is as a service provider, being in the position of producing affordable housing. Unified Vailsburg is a multiservice organization that does many things, like childcare, an afterschool program, community organizing.

We were taking applications for 13 units. We got over 400 applications for those units, and applications are still coming in.

Housing is just one the many things that we are trying to do in the Vailsburg section of Newark. I'm also Vice President of the Executive Committee of the Affordable Housing Network of NJ, and a member of the Newark Community Development Network, and in all of those

organizations what we are trying to do is produce more affordable housing.

In the trenches trying to get these houses produced, we come across a lot of problems, most of which are bureaucratic, trying to get through the piles of paperwork to get projects approved, go through the processes, zoning, etc. to try to get these projects off the ground. One of the things that we hope to do with the *Housing & Jobs Initiative* is to take another look at some of the regulatory processes to try to speed the process up, to get from the idea to the end a lot quicker.

That's another point we wish to work on is the *Initiative*. The other is just trying to get the funds for organizations like ours and others who produce housing, to manage the process, to hire experienced people, to develop the ideas, to follow requirements properly in order to produce these houses for those that need them. A lot of our problem is not producing housing, but producing housing for those who need it most. And that's talking about trying to get subsidies to bring the cost of the housing down to an affordable level.

That's another thing the *Initiative* is hoping to address. Trying to get more funds in the pot to lower the cost and make the housing affordable. We were taking applications for 13 units. We got over 400 applications for those units, and applications are still coming in. So there is that type of need. But the problem is 13 units is not what we need. We need units in the thousands, we need units in the hundreds. We can talk about our plan which is to build 65 or 70 units over the next few years, but that is what we can do with the resources we have, and that is not enough. That is a drop in the bucket compared to the need that is out there.

Organizations like myself need to be built up so that they can start producing 500 units in one year, not 60 units in one year, and that is what the *Initiative* is about. The more groups that are out their developing housing, the more housing that will be produced. I'm not here to just say we need more money to do what we do. An offshoot of housing is that jobs are created as the housing gets built. Jobs are also an issue too, along with building the affordable housing.

Rich: *I think both go hand in hand, jobs and housing.*

Arnold Cohen, Affordable Housing Network of NJ:

As we go out there to address the problem of housing and jobs, we need a plan. Housing advocates from across the state have come together to put together a comprehensive plan to begin to address the issue of the desperate need for housing and jobs that we have in this state. It's called the *Housing & Jobs Initiative*.

Housing advocates from across the state have come together to put together a comprehensive plan to begin to address the issue of the desperate need for housing and jobs that we have in this state. It's called the Housing & Jobs Initiative.

What the *Initiative* calls for is the building of more affordable units of housing. It calls for the state to put together a *Rental Assistance Program*. For those people who cannot afford the rent, or just need a little more to stay there, they will have that rental assistance. It calls for a program to help those people who want to become homeowners but cannot afford the closing costs and the down payment.

It calls for a jobs program in lower income areas, to provide job training and help people who want to conduct their own business. It calls for help for non-profit organizations that are there in communities working side-by-side with people trying to build up their neighborhoods.

The *Housing & Jobs Initiative* is something that calls for $500 million to be spent over 3 years to begin addressing these problems. $500 million isn't going to address the whole problem, but it's a start. In order to get this through the legislature that we have now, in order to get the approval of the governor that we have now, what we need is the support of everybody that we have here in this room, and everybody that is not here in this room.

One-third of the people in the state of NJ. have a housing problem. The state legislators need to hear from all those folks, their relatives their friends. We have postcards to go to the legislatures. We will pass them out, and we'd like everybody to sign it. There is also a yellow sheet here. Fill it out if you want to help us be part of the effort to do something about this problem.

One-third of the people in the state of NJ. have a housing problem.

There is also a plan nationally. I don't know how many people can see this chart. What this shows is where our federal housing subsidies are going. Most of the housing subsidy money is going to subsidize rich people who own homes. They get a tax write off for their mortgage deductions. That is where most of the money is going to subsidize housing. Down here is the amount for the poor renters.

What we are talking about is that we need to take some of the money from the top, some of this money which is going to the rich homeowners, and use it for a housing trust fund to help subsidize those people at the bottom who really do need that help.

That housing trust fund is a national program that we'll be letting you know more about, that's going to be introduced next year as legislation, and that's going to need people's help on a national level. Right now I'm asking people to join together by filling out the postcard, the yellow sheet, and let's let our state legislators know that they need to be doing something about the problem of housing today. We have a plan that calls for $500 million, and we could at least do something to start addressing this problem.

Ms. Bernadine Fillmore, Tenant:

I'm Bernadine Fillmore. I live in Hyatt Court. I've heard a lot of tenants say they have to go out with managers and fight with them. Well I've found out that if you come right to a manager or to your superintendent and don't go through a lot of hollering and cussing out and screaming, that we're able to solve a lot of our problems with Public Housing. I'd like to recommend Frank Hutchins and the Low Income Housing Coalition for giving me the power, and letting me know the rules.

Mike Ferruggia,
Interfaith Hospitality Network:

I'm sitting here trying to decide what to say in 3 minutes. I run a small program that shelters homeless families from church to church to temple in the suburban areas. We get volunteers that take these families in, provide food, spend time with the children. Maybe in a year's time we'll be able to help 25 to 30 families. The panel that you see here this morning, some of the people you see in this room have been involved with the issue of housing for 15 years.

Something went wrong about 10 years ago. I'm not sure what it is, but when somebody has to pay $450 a month or $550 a month to live in some of these buildings on South Orange Avenue, it's not right.

I'm a little tired this morning because I rented a truck, and I helped move a husband and wife and

3 children into their house in Vailsburg yesterday. They were in my program for 3 months. My being tired is because I have used muscles that I haven't used recently to lift a donated refrigerator, and an old chair, and a used mattress that people donated to them because they need it. That kind of tired is not anything comparable to the kind of tired that you all should be feeling when you go down 16th Avenue and you see all these buildings that don't have windows and are burnt out, and these are places where people need to live.

Something went wrong about 10 years ago. I'm not sure what it is, but when somebody has to pay $450 a month or $550 a month to live in some of these buildings on South Orange Avenue, it's not right. And then you have a system of welfare where a couple years ago too many of you were getting sheltered and too many of you were going into the hotels. So you know how to get rid of homelessness? If we don't help people there won't be statistics on homelessness anymore. Somebody on welfare can't go to the central place anymore because there is no central place. Rector Street is just an office now. It's where you go to see your caseworker.

Where I get all my families from and where other non-profits get their families from is Legal Services. The reason they're coming from Legal Services is because they are getting turned down from Welfare when they should be getting helped. I'm glad there is a *Speak Out*. Somebody has got to talk. New Jersey just voted a $500 bond issue to build housing for the disabled. That's because people in NJ are generally nice people.

The people that work in my program are all from Maplewood, Montlcair, Upper Montlcair, Millburn. I laugh because some of my families when they drive up to Millburn to spend the night, it would be nice if they could stay for a while. But when we talk about homelessness, nobody wants to vote for that, because they all have this misconception. I think this has to change, and I'm glad everybody's here.

Rich: *We get tired sometimes but we don't get worn out, that's the important thing.*

Sakinah Boyette, Tenant:

I am a tenant in Newark. I'm also the project coordinator for the state of NJ United Parents Against Lead, which is a national organization. I wanted to bring to light today the issue of lead poisoning, parents and families, and housing and jobs, and put it all together.

One of the problems that we deal with as parents of lead poisoned children is also housing too. It's hard to find housing for children who have been lead poisoned. Once a child has been lead poisoned, and the number is over 15 milligrams, the city by law must come out and inspect wherever they move to. Many times during that inspection they find other violations which must be written up which have never been seen before. With that, the landlord cannot understand this.

Once a child has been lead poisoned, and the number is over 15 milligrams, the city by law must come out and inspect wherever they move to.

You're in a situation if you try to do right, you're in trouble, but if you let it go your child gets worse.

By law, there are some violations that you can take out of your rent and have fixed. You're in a situation if you try to do right, you're in trouble, but if you let it go your child gets worse. So that's the big issue for the parents with lead poisoned children. I'm also working with the Donald Jackson Neighborhood Corporation as the Lead Task Force Chairperson. One of the things that we're working on is that we have recruited

neighborhood residents to go through lead abatement training. This is our way of pulling people off the streets, getting them good training, and putting them back into the community for employment.

Right now I'm trying to work with HUD to provide more homes for lead poisoning families. Newark just was awarded $200,000 for lead abatement. We're trying to convince them that the Central Ward is not the only place that has problems, but also the South Ward. More training on lead abatement, and we're going to be pushing for as much funding in our direction as possible. By the way, as of Tuesday, I don't know where I'll be living at.

Geraldine Howard, Tenant:

I am just going to tell you about the legal fight. We've been going to court since 1985 with our different landlords. The court system has to be changed. It's like a revolving door. And they tell you when you go to court to speak to a mediator, and she tells you they cannot force the landlord to make any repairs.

All they can do is give you a rebate. If you go to court and you get a rebate, and it's up to a $100.00 and you have already put in 10 months of your rent of $500.00 or 600.00 for your tenants (we had 40 tenants), there is no incentive for him to do the repairs.

The financial situation makes it clear to him that he's going to win if he only has to give that little bit of money back to the tenants. There is no incentive for him to make the repairs, and they tell you plainly they can't make him do anything. We've been fighting with our landlords since 1985. Over the past year or two, we've had six changes in our landlord, which is part of the problem. Once you get one to court, they change hands, and another one takes over. So it's like you never get a chance to get ahead with the legal system or with the landlord. So that's our struggle. We have made some progress in our continuing struggles against property owners.

We've been down to the Rent Control Board with one of our owners. He was going to use an ordinance that Rent Control had, that would make him be able to go up on our rent as much as he could. For any complaints he would just hand the rent control board a slip for repairs that he had done, but we were able to stop that, and stop our building from being turned into condos.

We've been fighting with our landlords since 1985. Over the past year or two, we've had six changes in our landlord, which is part of the problem.

So it's like you never get a chance to get ahead with the legal system or with the landlord.

The next fight that we will have, we're trying to get a law instituted that would, underneath the Rent Control law, instead of him going up annually 4% without him making any repairs, we want to tie that into if the building is not up to code, he can not go up for any change in rent, until that building has been brought up to code. That way we can force the landlords to try to keep their buildings up to code. That's one of the things we have been working on and we'll be fighting for in 1995.

Rich: *She makes a very good point talking about the Coalition for Rent Control and how we can organize to deal with the City's regulations.*

Gloria Davis, Tenant:

I'm a tenant at 15 Pennington Street. We've been in this building for 12 years. The same problems we've had since years ago are still with us. Those problems are maintenance, security and drugs.

They are are teenagers, some of them who have lived in the buildings all their lives, have now started dealing drugs around in the play area where the children are supposed to be playing.

Management doesn't seem to be able to do anything about it, and I really think they really don't care. They took our security from us because they didn't have the money for security. If you ask for repairs you can't get repairs because they don't have the money. But they have the money to put up steel doors to keep the drug dealers from coming in and out of the building. It doesn't seem right to me, and it doesn't seem right to anybody that lives in Newark. If they don't have money for small repairs, where do they get the money for big repairs, steel doors and things like this?

The only time that you can get anything done in that building is when they're getting ready to have an inspection

When the inspectors come, the inspectors will go to selected apartments that the manager takes them to.

My son has 3 children. He's been asking for three or four years for guard rails on the windows, so guess what, last week they are going around taking measurements for guardrails for the entire building. Where is this money coming from? Nobody knows, but now they have the money. The only time that you can get anything done in that building is when they're getting ready to have an inspection. Yesterday they started to paint the walls and make repairs. Everybody in the building knows that inspection time is due cause they're making repairs.

I was told yesterday that they'll be coming in to repair two closet doors that I had asked to have repaired 3 years ago. Now they're coming in with the inspectors so they are making repairs. When the inspectors come, the inspectors will go to selected apartments that the manager takes them to.

The apartments that are really in need of repairs they will never see, because this is not what management wants them to see. These are the things that are very upsetting to my son and I as tenants in the building we've been in for 12 years. Thank you for your time.

Rich: *We will try to follow up on issues that people bring to us. We know that through organizing maybe we can alleviate some of the upsetness that's around us.*

Matt Strauss,
Tri-City Peoples Organization:

I want to thank everybody for coming out. It's really important to have community action. My role at Tri-City is that I'm a VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America), and I have a few of my co-workers with me. This is a program that was started in the 60's. They tried to kill it in the 80's, when they were out to kill big government, and President Clinton brought it back. It's a program where the federal government sponsors me to work for the Tri-City People's Organization and my specific assignment is housing. We'll see how long this program lasts.

I'm not allowed, being a federal employee to talk about things like *Contract for America*. But these programs are in danger, money to HUD is in danger, money to all these programs to help people that need help is in serious trouble right now. We really need to get out there and let them know that we're not going to allow this to happen. It's going to happen unless there's a big loud grassroots effort. You notice the politicians haven't shown up yet. It's not by accident. Of course they've got another meeting and it's not about housing.

What we have to do here is we've got to vote, first of all. If all the people that needed affordable housing voted, the politicians would be here right now. Probably most of you are here, you're obviously concerned about these issues, you probably voted.

What it takes is, you get the people who live next door to you, you've got to get them to vote, you've got to get them to show up here, you've got to get them to say I'm not going to take it anymore, to stop turning the other way when they see a crime committed. It's hard to do.

...money to all these programs to help people that need help is in serious trouble right now.

If all the people that needed affordable housing voted, the politicians would be here right now.

There's a lot of pressure from people around you to conform, not to go against what's going on, what's socially acceptable, but while you're doing that, the neighborhood is going down. Politicians aren't responding. We have a sign one of our VISTA's put up saying, VISTA's Are Here To Organize. They're aren't very many of us. There's not a lot of money to pay us.

We need a lot of help. We need help from you. We need the *Housing Jobs Initiative* that Arnold talked about. It's one way of doing this. It sends a message. We need to get votes from people in the Statehouse to get this passed. The only way this is going to happen is if we sign up more registered voters, let them know that that is what we're concerned about, let them know that you're concerned about it, write letters to people, send in these cards, and really organize, organize, organize. I don't know what else to say.

Mrs. Francis Houston,
Tenant, Georgia King Village:

We have all been talking about affordable housing, but what about the managers? If we have affordable housing, why not get managers who have some kind of human resources towards the tenants? You can get a manager, and if you don't have someone that understands the majority of people that live in that building, you just as well as destroy it. Let's look at both sides.

The managers they have in these complexes now, they do not have any human feelings toward the tenants. And they will lie, HUD will lie, Trenton will lie that they are doing a beautiful job. We had an affair two months ago in the daytime with the doctors and nurses, and HUD was there. (For that occasion) the management fixed up the fences so that they could say that they are doing a good job.

We have mice, roaches. Inside, some of the hallways are coming down. People's apartments, in the townhouses, it's ridiculous. There are sewer backups in peoples apartments. They have dug up the ground at least 20 times. Instead of fixing the pipes, they say someone has been putting a shoe down the commode, or something else down the commode.

You can get a manager, and if you don't have someone that understands the majority of people that live in that building, you just as well as destroy it

Everyone knows they are lying. Let's think about this. At one of the complexes, the manager had an idea to charge the tenants $100 after 10 days. Now you know that is farfetched. So let's put our hearts and minds together, let's join hands, and let's stop this infestation of management, HUD, and Trenton, and whoever. We have poor security in all the complexes.

Rich: *Let's join hands. We've got to stay united. We've got to be part of the process. It will mean very little if we don't stay together. People who are here this morning, I hope you will continue to come out.*

Vic De Luca, Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing:

1987 is when the city of Newark first decided to destroy all their public high-rises. A bunch of us came together and said, *"What are you going to do, how are you going to provide housing if you let this happen?"* They said, *"Well we're going to make these townhouses."* They made the promises but never built the townhouses. We sued them in federal court in 1989. We're still negotiating on some of the issues, but I want to report that we made some success. We've gotten commitment. They're going to build 1777 townhouses in the city, 649 are now being built or have been built. You see them rising up on Irving Turner Boulevard, where the old Scudder Home site is on Court Street, up in the North Ward across from where Columbus Homes is. These are units that are being built. About 500 of the units will go to people off the waiting list. Newark Housing Authority has a waiting list. The other units will go to people that are in public housing who will transfer there.

> ***We need to make sure that folks who we elect do our job, and that's get affordable housing.***

Let me tell you folks, and I hope the Board here is listening. This was not done because political people in the city said let's do it. This was done in spite of them. They put up every obstacle that could exist to stop public housing and low income housing from being built here in the city of Newark. And we need to remember, and please when you issue your report and it gets in the Star Ledger, that housing is a political issue.

That Mayor James ran a campaign last May that didn't talk at all about housing for low income people. It was not in his platform. What was in his literature was the housing that the Coalition is successfully getting built. He bragged about that. He didn't lift a finger. He fought us day by day by day. Yet he got elected with 62% of the vote. We need to speak the truth. The truth is that the Mayor doesn't care about low income people. The truth is that it goes right up the line.

That the Governor doesn't care about low income people. Now we have a County Executive, and we have a County, that looks to give more money to Berger hotels, to house people in those welfare hotels, as opposed to finding real solutions. So we need to make sure that this a political fight. That this isn't just something that's good, and something that's right. We need to make sure that folks who we elect do our job, and that's get affordable housing.

> ***We need to make sure that folks of any color, any religion, any income have the right to go live wherever they want***

My time is up, and I was just starting. One last thing. Don't forget race and racism, and classism, as issues that we are dealing with here. And if you want to remember it, look at the history of the Mt. Laurel decision. This was a big decision that the State Supreme Court agreed that every municipality in the state of NJ (567) had to build low income housing.

Everyone, from Millburn to Newark, from Camden, to Collingswood, everyone, and the suburban towns have stopped honoring that responsibility. We need to make sure that folks of any color, any religion, any income have the right to go live wherever they want. And that means challenging these suburban towns to build the housing that they are supposed to build, saying to the Governor that they need to make sure

that this housing is built, not just for senior citizens, although they need housing to

They say we'll build for senior citizens but we don't want low income families. We need to make sure that housing is built, housing in Newark, and housing across the state. It's a political issue, and we need to be out there 365 days, making sure these elected officials are accountable to our needs

Joseph Roberson, Tenant:

My name is Joseph Roberson. I am a tenant. Number one I do agree with some of the ideas that have been discussed. Number two, I disagree with a lot of them. I am a senior citizen, I am a tenant. I have been run till I am ragged, from Newark to Irvington, from one area to the other, from Irvington, to Newark, to Trenton. It's all a game. The whole thing is a game. Don't tell me what Trenton will do, nothing. I've been to court five or six different times. I suffer from chronic bronchial asthma, and the Director in Irvington claims that I was drunk. She doesn't know when a person has an asthma attack. I ran to HUD. HUD said they don't know nothing about this and that. Yet and still she was relieved from her position for thieving. Larrie Stalks I stayed in her place, and I sued her. When I complained to Larrie. Larrie said it's a personal thing, there's nothing I can do about that. Where was the money? The thing of it is I want all you people to stand up and fight for yourself

Elouise Washington, Tenant, Clinton Arms:

In June of 1994, we had a serious problem there, so I decided to put a plan together, to ask HUD to come and investigate. HUD investigated Clinton Arms Apartments, and there was a lot of fraud that was going on. We pay our rent, plus the subsidy that we get from Section 8. Every time a tenant or myself goes to the office to fill out forms for repairs or whatever, it never goes anywhere.

So when HUD came to investigate, they had filed all these reports. We paint your apartment every three years, all this money they claimed they had spent on paint. I moved there in 1986. My apartment hasn't had a paint job until this year. HUD came through and did a 100% inspection. And they found that broken cabinets, refrigerators, leaks, sewage backup, everything was wrong with that place that could possibly be

HUD investigated Clinton Arms Apartments, and there was a lot of fraud that was going on.

HUD did a thorough investigation, and they called in the incompetent management that has been in charge, and as of today the investigation is still going on. We still have a lot of problems there. We have a lot of drugs in the area. I had a tenant meeting December 1, Thursday night at 5 o'clock. I invited Police Community Services to come out because there's a lot of kids in the area who are selling drugs. I know these kids are not getting the drugs on their own

What I'm telling them is you have adults there who are giving these kids drugs to go out and sell for them. I wanted Police Community Service to come in and speak to the parents regarding the drug transaction in the neighborhood. The meeting was Thursday night. I called Wednesday morning to make sure the Police would be there. When my tenant meeting was over, the police had not shown up. That really hurt me. They didn't call. They didn't show up. They did not send anyone

So our tenant meeting went on. I talked to the parents. I said if you know you're not giving your child money, and your child comes in with $80.00 or $90.00 sneakers on, you know

something's wrong. It's time for you to ask questions. That's what it is all about. I am very hurt with the Newark Police Department. On Monday morning I will be somewhere making some kind of accusation toward why they didn't show up at my meeting Thursday

Cameron Drayton, Tenant, Essex Plaza:

The main problem in our building and in other buildings in the area are the drugs. Everybody is complaining about buildings going down. If you alleviate the drug problem from the building, and give the kids something to do, they will not tear down the building. They'll have other activities. I would like to get the cards from the dignitaries here to see if there is some way you can help us.

Now that the building is going down, you don't hear anymore about Essex Plaza.

Management is not doing their job. My children are over there. They've been born and raised there. When we came in the complex that we are in, we were part of Newark's "renaissance." In other words, we're part of Essex Plaza. Essex Plaza has a senior citizen building, and then Essex Plaza II and III. When we came there about 10 or 12 years ago, it was all over the front of the newspaper, all the good stuff that the Mayor was doing. Now that the building is going down, you don't hear anymore about Essex Plaza.

I think with your help, we can get something positive done. We want to start getting people to come to Essex Plaza, taking the different pictures of Essex Plaza, to show them where the money is going. I mean when it is good everybody is talking about it. What is going to happen to Society Hill now that they built it. When they go downhill, you won't see them anymore in the papers.

You know we talk about the drug dealing. They have a law which states that if anyone is selling drugs in an apartment building. I'm not sure if HUD has this law, or whoever, but if you're selling drugs in an apartment building, whoever is living in this apartment where they are selling drugs is supposed to be removed, remove the people.

I don't mean to sound harsh or anything, but I'm quite sure that the parents know their children are selling drugs, so have those people removed. And I feel that if you've got drugs in the building, and there's children out selling, then management must know it, and if management knows, bring them up on charges also.

Rich: *Security and public safety issues are very important issues related to crime.*

Bill Good, Tenant,
Douglass Harrison Apartments:

I live at Douglass Harrison Apartments. As you know, Douglass Harrison Apartments is owned by New Community Corporation. The buildings have been around since the 1930's. I've lived there all my life. I've been there 42 years. Prior to New Community taking over in 1983, the Douglass Harrison Apartments was considered the pride of the Central Ward. It was the place everybody wanted to live, some of the best housing in the city. If you could see it now, you would be horrified.

I'd just like to say that millions of dollars have been allocated to Douglass Harrison Apartments since New Community has taken over, and if you look at it, you have to wonder where the money was spent. I'm going to show you a few pictures here that show some of the kinds of things that exist or had existed at Douglass Harrison Apartments. These pictures are taken this year. These pictures were shown in Washington D.C. in March of this year. People were horrified to see some of these conditions. Actually for those who have time, I have some videotape of some of the conditions.

Let me just say that one of the things that people have been hearing over the years is that NCC has been doing such a great job in the city of Newark, and whether you agree or disagree with that, all you have to do is come down and look at Douglass Harrison Apartments and see how they have deteriorated over the years A lot of people that work for NCC have told me off the record that they feel the problems as well, and they believe that NCC is one of the worst run organizations that they've ever seen.

When I was in Washington in March, we met with Secretary Cisneros, Secretary of HUD, and Cisneros had just given NCC or approved $24 million for the HOPE project, and I questioned Mr Cisneros why did you give $24 million to a group, and I showed him some of these pictures, and he was quite surprised. Apparently, he had been snowed into believing that these were the kinds of good people that you would give money to continue to do affordable housing in Newark

I'd just like to say for those of you who live in NCC or any building that you feel that the owner is not giving you the benefits you deserve, the only thing you can do is organize and continue to organize. The mood in Washington now is that people in the inner city are unorganized and we can do what we want, we can cut back. It is important that we fight back.

I'd just like to say for those of you who live in NCC or any building that you feel that the owner is not giving you the benefits you deserve, the only thing you can do is organize and continue to organize The mood in Washington now is that people in the inner city are unorganized and we can do what we want, we can cut back It is important that we fight back. I think it is important that we continue to organize, we continue to have forums of these kinds, meetings. What I'd like to do when we go back to Washington, I'd like to take some of this tape and let people see what we've been doing in Newark

I'd like to close by saying we talk about the Renaissance in the city of Newark, but all you have to do is look at some of the housing. We took some people from across the country, from Boston, upstate NY, from other parts of the country, we took them on a short tour of the Central Ward of Newark They had seen some terrible things in some other cities, New York and Chicago, and some other places, but some of them were moved to tears by what they saw in some of the housing in the city of Newark

...some of them were moved to tears by what they saw in some of the housing in the city of Newark.

I think it's important for us to continue to pull together, and fight the kinds of things that are going on. I'd like to encourage everybody to continue to come out, and I think these kinds of meetings should continue and I applaud the turnout and your continuing to stand up and fight

Tyrone Harvin, Tenant, Pomona Avenue:

I'm a troublemaker I've been in court so many times, I think they're going to call me by my first name down there I don't understand that when I pay my money to you, that you don't give me the services that my money is supposed to get We have stacks of violations, code violations The laws are antiquated It's almost like Catch 22

You get code enforcement to come down They say that management is in violation for not making repairs They make a little repair You go back to code They did not finish the job Code says, OK, we'll give them a little more time Eventually it almost seems like you get tired after awhile, you get tired of just going back and forth. In my apartment building, for the same

apartment and room space, there are four different rents.

Can you tell me why when you have the same accommodations that I have, you pay more money? That's because when they put you out, they're allowed to make so much repairs, and they go up on your rent. I don't understand that I don't understand that when I don't have heat, that I go down to Rent Control and I say I don't have heat, OK we have to record this and record that

I don't understand that when I pay my money to you, that you don't give me the services that my money is supposed to get.

Then they give them so much time to fix it. They come and they do a few repairs for the monies that they get. The heat goes out again. The laws are antiquated. We have to stick together, vote, change the laws.

Rich: *Stick together, vote, change the laws. Sounds like a good prescription.*

Brenda Roberson, Tenant:

I want to know when a landlord sets a person's house on fire, what are they supposed to do? This particular landlord, 2 Osborne Terrace I'm speaking about. The City and Mayor Sharpe James gave him so much money to fix the building up, and he turns around and puts it into a laundromat

My solution is don't pay all our taxes to the city, and maybe that might show them that we aren't going to take it anymore.

The landlord and Mayor Sharpe James and the administration, what they give people all these rent monies to do is to fix these properties up for the people but instead of that, they put the money in businesses and all that kind of stuff. This has got to stop in the city of Newark. He has been getting away with it because drugs are right there on that corner, as a matter of fact its around that whole neighborhood. That needs to be stopped, but he brings drugs in that particular store in that complex there, gives drugs to people. Another point, New Community Corporation gets tax abatements, then the city gives them so much grants to fix the apartments with. What do they do with they money?

Now I read in the Star Ledger about the federal investigation going on. On Wednesday, they want the people to vote to pay for their legal fees.

Everybody should be at that City Council meeting objecting to that because our taxes are going to go up. We're going to lose our houses. My solution is don't pay all our taxes to the city, and maybe that might show them that we aren't going to take it anymore

Frank Hurtz, Tenant:

My name is Frank Hurtz. I live at 402 Mt. Prospect Ave. My concern today is the aspect of tax abatement as it relates to housing. The last Council meeting, the Council passed a 30 year tax abatement to people who live in Vogue Housing, and they will be paying for the next 30 years $1,200.00. That's robbery. The thing is they can only do that as long as we allow them to do that. We can sit here and talk among ourselves. But we've got to do more than that

We've got to go down to the Council meetings and address them and make them accountable. That is what organization is all about, making people accountable. The real tragedy about the Vogue housing is that you and I have paid for this development over and over again. When it fist started, when Donald Harris put up this unit, it went under, and the city had to pick it up, and ever since then, the city has been pumping

money in order to keep this building afloat, but the tragedy is that those houses didn't go to really low income people, they went to the people that are working in city hall

They've gone to people that are making good salaries that could well afford to pay the property taxes that many of the people in this town pay Not only the property owners but the renters. I rent, because I love to rent. I love living in an apartment. But the rents that I pay are incredible In the Abbington Towers, for a 1 bedroom apartment, they get $1,000 $1,000 - that's criminal So you see what I'm saying to you is that this whole thing is such a complicated, and complex thing, that unless we come together, not together in these discussions, this is fine, but this is only a stumbling stone

I love living in an apartment. But the rents that I pay are incredible. In the Abbington Towers, for a 1 bedroom apartment, they get $1,000. $1,000 - that's criminal.

Wednesday, there's going to be a Council meeting. Most of you can't attend because you will be working. But you can get on the phone and call (your Councilperson).

What I'm saying to you here is I have a petition here that some of the folks got together just the other day, and we're asking people who oppose this to sign this petition, because we're going to have a class action suit We're going to really make them pay for it

Rich: *One of our City Council members lives in that housing project.*

Frank Hurtz:

This is the criminality of it all We don't have time to look into the records. We trust them. One of the Councilman lives in that development, George Branch. And he voted to give himself a tax abatement five years ago That's illegal That's conflict of interest He's sitting on the Council and he votes to give himself a tax abatement We don't know that solely because we don't have the time to go through the records. Well the record shows. Anybody who wants the record, I'll give it to them Criminal!

Rich: *One of the things Frank mentioned is about things we don't know. We need to make new alliances that we haven't thought of before. Newark is a college town. Maybe some of these progressive minded students will want to do some research to help some of our tenant associations and community organizations out.*

Nancy Jobar (works with the homeless):

I'm here to address the homeless situation. I work in a shelter I understand certain concerns people have about shelters and how they are run I'm here to talk about the one we run. I'm from Sussex Ave. We have a shelter at 224 Sussex, right across the street from the Youth House. It is a very big facility It can house a lot of people We don't

We have 10,000 square feet that I have been writing proposal after proposal to Trenton to get funds to do automotive training, to do all kinds of training Right now we're doing GED because unfortunately that's the only thing that we can afford to do taining in

However, the people that are homeless here in Newark need to go further than training We need money There's plenty of automotive jobs in this city and the surrounding cities that the homeless people can be working in, but they don't have the skills.

We have the space, we have the people, we have partial funding All we need is a little bit more funding and we can continue our training. People need to be trained in order to work There are

not a lot of jobs out here, but if you have no skills you don't get any employment. The state is now talking about cutting and capping TRA, but they have people that are not trained that are living on TRA, and have maybe the 11th month to go or the 12th month to go, and the state is talking about we don't want to help them no more.

There are not a lot of jobs out here, but if you have no skills you don't get any employment.

What's going to happen to those people? They're going to be back in the streets. However the state has a bill that's called S1175. It says that once you finish TRA, welfare can't help you no more. This means you're going to be on the streets, with no money, no nothing. People we need to wake up. Get rid of S1175. Call your Senators. Because if we don't homeless people are going to be on the streets.

Timothy Mattone, Homeless:

I'm one of the homeless individuals in the city of Newark, and I also stay at 224 Sussex Ave. (a homeless shelter). I represent an organization called STEPS (Solutions To End Poverty Soon). The thing with this is we're trying to find solutions to end these problems in our city and not the Band-Aid solutions. Not we'll give you an apartment for 12 months and if you happen to get an education or a career or training or something fine, if you don't who cares? That's a Band-Aid solution.

It's our responsibility as human beings to help each other. The people that we elect to these positions they seem to have forgotten that quality, to be humane.

There's going to be a meeting down in Trenton on the 8th of December. You'll be able to find out by calling Legal Aid and some other organizations, like St. Rocco's Outreach for Men. Women who have children who need some kind of care for your child to go down and represent, that will be provided. Organization is everything. It's everything. A lot of people are homeless, and who are not registered, who are not adequately set up to go to places, to get dressed up for interviews, to get the education skills that they need, and so they wander around out here lost.

A lot of them run into people like me, Prince, and a couple of other people I see in here, who can help direct them, but quite frankly, it's not our job. It's our responsibility as human beings to help each other. The people that we elect to these positions they seem to have forgotten that quality, to be humane. Their worried about the almighty buck, and where they're at, and what their position is. We threaten their position and their money, they will come and turn on what we want, what we need, what is our god given right.

Edna Rashid, Newark Coalition For low Income Housing:

I was asked to speak for some people from New Hope village. Primarily, their problem is the same as some of the tenants who have come up to speak so far, no heat, no water, and if you threaten a rent strike, you'll get some results, but as soon as the threat is over, the landlord or the manager goes back to business as usual. Because I'm an organizer by nature, I've been doing organizing for almost 20 years.

I have to say while I have this opportunity, tenants we must organize, we must join and make alliances. We have to do that. We have to begin to look at those items that we can work together, forget those that we don't for one brief moment. Because if we don't we'll find ourselves not only without safe, decent and affordable housing, we'll find ourselves with many of the people that we're trying to help - homeless.

A lot of us in the city are one check away from being homeless, and we have to realize that and have to bring our situation before those who have the power to make things different, and let them know that we're not just going to sit back and allow you to continue to create situations that perpetuate poverty, and have us living in conditions that are substandard

Affordable housing is not a privilege. It's our right.

We have to begin to organize. We have to unify and we need to bring attention to all of the problems that we are facing as residents of the city and throughout Essex County. Affordable housing is not a privilege. It's our right. We have the right to affordable housing. We have a right to safe, decent apartments. We have a right to own our own properties.

Mr. Terence Baines, Brick Towers, 685 MLK Boulevard:

I would like to address the issue of the current political climate that's existing in this country and how it's going to negatively impact on affordable housing

A lot of the rhetoric that we're hearing about cuts and slashes are going to directly affect our most poorest citizens and those people who seem to have the smallest voice.

A lot of the rhetoric that we're hearing about cuts and slashes are going to directly affect our most poorest citizens and those people who seem to have the smallest voice, and they're easy targets in a lot of ways because the politicians know by and large, they're not going to organize, they're just dealing with day to day issues, trying to eat

They're not concerned with voting and things of that nature. But particularly these cuts. In my normal job, I work for DYFS (Division of Youth & Family Services), and we hear them talking about cutting, and not assisting people, so they create homelessness. Now families get homeless, children become homeless. Children become homeless. They have no place to go. We have to take them because they have to have shelter

I just want to alert people that if they are allowed to continue on this reckless path that the impact on the children is going to be tremendous in this city and in this state. It simply cannot be allowed to happen. It simply cannot

I just want to alert people that if they are allowed to continue on this reckless path that the impact on the children is going to be tremendous in this city and in this state.

We barely have places for children now that are safe and decent. The system simply cannot stand that burden. On the one hand, they're talking about cuts, but they're simply creating more problems that are going to take more dollars to solve

Janice Adams, Forest Hill Tenants Association:

I want to repeat some of the things that have already been said in terms of the election which just took place in November. Now we have a Republican Senate and House of Representatives. And it's not because all the registered Republicans came out and voted en masse. Or that disgruntled Democrats went over to the Republican side. It's that Democrats didn't get out and vote

When they did the analysis of the election, they saw that the same number of Republicans that voted as voted in the last election. This points to

the fact that even if you don't like what's going on, get out there and vote. If it's the lesser of two evils, that's what you need to do. Another thing that I want to bring up is the Charles Murray madness. Now what has that got to do with anything?

There's this book called the Bell Curve. There is a connection between the Senate and what's going on. In this book, I read some excerpts. Every few generations, this comes around again, this kind of madness. In it, he's telling us that black folks are inferior

And by going through all of the existing data he has all of this proof which of course is skewed He's got all of this proof that Black folks are inferior And now it's genetic. Well we had Schockley telling us this in the 70's and we had Jensen telling us this in the 70's, and here we have it again in the 90's A thing that's equally as important as that is that he is now saying that all poor people are genetically inferior

You're not going to change the world overnight. But you have to get out there and do something

So it doesn't even matter the color that you are, if you are poor you are poor because of your genetics; you don't have what it takes to pull yourselves up by your bootstraps Of course he doesn't talk to the business of racism and classism in the country So all I'm saying is that we have to be about organizing, and I pledge to become much more involved in organizing. Get your tenant organizations together Get out there and vote Be very diligent and tenacious, and through your tenacity, you can have some victories

They may be small ones. Victories come in small increments. You're not going to change the world overnight But you have to get out there and do something As an example, we were able at our complex to renegotiate our lease and get some perks for the senior citizens. So it does work, and it doesn't take a whole bunch of people. It's better, but you can also do it with a small group of people. But you must be ever diligent I just want to quote a wise senior, who said something in conversation. "I hope that Clinton and Dole don't travel together, because we have Newt Gingrich in the wings, so hopefully they'll take separate transportation."

Rich: *Forest Hills Apartments is one of the reasons why all the subpoenas are going on down on City Hall. We organized a tenants association there to fight the condo conversion. That complex used to have a 2 year waiting list. The rents were about $372 for a 1 bedroom apartment. Since the condo conversion, which they've only sold 40 units of, rents have gone up to about $600 in the lowest one. And the tax abatement for that complex is what has gotten all these guys in hot water. All because we organized to stop them, and it delayed them, it costs them hundreds of thousands of dollars. So don't think that organizing doesn't have any affect.*

L. Prentice, President, Southern Man's Center For Humanity

I'm President of the Southern Man's Center for Humanity, which is coalition of homeless people in the city of Newark We've been in existence for about a year Our primary function is to change the image that the homeless community suffers in our present society One of the things that we do is a public relations for the homeless community I'd like to read a statement

We are living in an age when the quality of life is to often defined by technical advances, balanced budgets, or one's ability to adhere to political correctness We as a society have reached the zenith. Society has surrendered its virginity, its humanity, the virtue of democracy to the rich and powerful demagogues whose goals make a mockery of the statement "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal "

As the winds of time transport America to the ever closer 21st century, we are faced with this situation of the tail wagging the dog. We are living in an age when it is easier to write our ideas as a nation in stone than to translate patriotic slogans into everyday truths and practical realities We now must inspect all of our collective history to discover where we relinquished our claim to the phrase government by the people, to become bit players in a George Orwell 1984 novel

> ***...the new homeless is often a family; many times, including the mother, with one, two or more children***

The issue of homelessness (I like to refer to them as the extended community) is difficult and complex at best, can be swept under the rug as the warm months are upon us, but as winter comes to us, in the cold months, it becomes as distasteful as a fly sitting on top of a strawberry shortcake. After years of superhuman efforts, and millions of dollars, our communities still suffer from misconceptions that may be one of the root causes of the negative attitudes that prevail as it relates to the extended community The impression has been created that members of the extended community have failed as human beings.

Citizens, human service providers, and government, have been treated to a cynical attitude as a response to the plight of the poor and the homeless. Homelessness is not just a problem of housing. It is also a problem of the human condition. Unlike years past, the traditional homeless person was seen as a white male with a drug or alcohol problem, and personal problems

Today, however, the new homeless is often a family, many times, including the mother, with one, two or more children. It is not uncommon that she has been abused and has substance abuse problems She is often unemployed, and has limited educational skills The need for government and human service agencies to effectively deal with the issues of homelessness, they must first work with the general profile in order to administer these programs.

In a world that travels on the communication superhighway, in a billion dollar budget wilderness, the individual person must surrender their uniqueness as a human being in order to receive the available goods and services provided by the larger society The dangers of classification of human beings is that it is only one step away from bigotry The lives of the extended community may not fit your idea of the American dream, but above all things we are not, we are still American citizens, and deserve to be involved in the process of establishing any policies that affect our lives

The extended community believes that the Mayor's homeless commission would be strengthened if members of the extended community served along with the current membership Knowledge is power The sum total of all knowledge and its conclusion is moral action The extended community believes that if we can forge a working relationship with the human service community, the business community, and government community, together we can solve the puzzle that will break the cycle of homelessness, and we'll be able to stand before the world, and ensure our citizens that the best is yet to come

Terri Suess, Home Owner, Tenant Activist:

I wasn't going to talk today, I was just going to listen, but I couldn't resist I've been really depressed since the election. I read everyday in the paper it was a sweep, and we all know it wasn't a sweep. It was won by very narrow majorities, because we didn't have enough to get over Even at that, I don't think our problems are resolved It's one of the pieces of the picture

Here I come to this room and I meet people that I've worked with for years and years in Newark,

and it's always a joy to be in the same room with my friends organizing in Newark, and then I meet people I worked with from Elizabeth whom I haven't seen in years, and then Bill Watson I know organized my neighborhood So thanks to Bill we have a beautiful place to live Although the block clubs are barely hanging on, Bill did a lot of important groundwork

I used to work as a reporter years ago, and one of the reasons I quit being a reporter, is because the newspaper people need to have stuff fed to them, and I said I'd rather feed them stuff any day than be there and report what government says That's what we get in the paper Whatever this group decides, I would recommit myself to working with you on publicity and actions and research, all I can

I think we need some Committees We've got Legislative talent, we've got action talent, we've got publicity talent and maybe we do need to pull that together and pursue it and if anybody says let's raise a little sand I would certainly help organize that

Marie Satterfield:

A record came out by Sister Soul not to long ago where she was saying it's 1995 and slavery's back in affect I'm going to show you why it's not too farfetched Parallels 1594 vs 1994 During slavery we had 3 levels of slavery We had field slave, which is the one which did all the work, then you had the house slave, the one that kept them working, and then the overseer, a starving white person whose main job was to protect the one's who were living off of the money from the one's who were producing the money, the workers at the bottom

Today we have the same thing, we have the homeless people on the street that everybody kicks around How can you tell that your rich unless you've got somebody poor to compare it with? Also we got the blue collar worker that's just above there And then we got the corporations, the managers and stuff that keeps everybody else in line, to protect the 5% that live off the wealth from the 95% of the ones that produce the wealth In slavery, people worked for just bare subsistence Today people work for just bare subsistence

In prison, you don't have to do anything to go there You just have to look a certain way, or live in a certain neighborhood, or be under a certain sets of parents, so you end up in the prison system, and make $1 25 a day Is that not slavery? Yes it is Housing So here you are, you haven't been making enough to pay your rent Your rent is maybe 80% of what you bring home Your just barely eating or whatever, and somebody decides that they don't need your job anymore, so you're out, your kids are You're out there with your kids

Back in slavery, they could sell your children If they decided they wanted some money, they'd take your children, and sell them Now you get homeless, they'll take your children away from you What's the difference? It's the same So we have to recognize that slavery has to come back We have to recognize it for what it is

Walter Washington, Tenant Leader:

I am the President of the St James Towers Washington St Tenants I've been there since 1979 In 1991, the management wanted to take the washing machines off every floor We got everybody to sign petitions

We need to stay organized, come together, and let these people know that we're not going take it any more.

This year the manager tried to move the machines. This year, we signed petitions again This year, instead of moving the machines, he gave us two new washing machines on every floor

That's good But after that he put locks on the doors I think that is ridiculous.

Why should you have a laundry room on every floor, and then have locks on the doors. We need to stay organized, come together, and let these people know that we're not going take it any more We have to put God in front When we put him in front, then we'll get moving.

Nancy Zak, Tenant Organizer:

> ***We lost 20% of our affordable housing, that's one quarter of our housing.***

I wanted to start with this report. If you haven't gotten this you may want to see this. This is the 1994 Report To the County Executive on Homelessness in Essex County On page 1, it has the figure 32,000 homeless persons in Essex County This is the County's own report This is not some group organizing against the county or organizing for housing. This is the official report, this is the official number 32,000 homeless people. It's a disgrace Now I'm going to show you another page, and this explains part of why the 32,000 homeless are there This is the chart which shows the gain or loss of housing in Newark in recent years I think this covers the last 10 years or the last 5 years They don't actually say 20%. If you look at Newark, we're the biggest one We lost 20% of our affordable housing, that's one quarter of our housing.

Where do all those people go? Where are they supposed to live? Where are we supposed to go? Now logically if you're losing housing at a rate like this, would you not, if you were a logical person, would you not make that a high priority in your city? Would you not take steps to make sure that the buildings that are already up, and are already housing people, were not kept up in decent, safe, and affordable, so that you don't continue to lose housing every year Wouldn't you take the steps that we need to take to fix up the building?

Now we have buildings we've been working in the HUD Tenant's Coalition with 20 different complexes around the city These are privately owned HUD-assisted properties. They are paid for with our taxes We should have some say so in how these buildings are run, and certainly, the residents who live there, should have some say so in the decisions which are made about those buildings which affect their lives This is what we have been saying. This is a report that was done last winter of about 13 of the buildings, and I will give the panel a copy of the report

This report is a summary of conditions in all of these buildings. Every single one of them have problems with elevators Now elevators may not seem like an important problem but when you're living in a 20 story building it is a life and death problem. And you all know that 2 people died in Newark last January because they could not get up 20 flights, and they had medical situations, and the medical personnel could not get to them. We cannot afford to have that happen again. We cannot let that happen again

> ***...the residents who live there, should have some say so in the decisions which are made about those buildings which affect their lives.***

And yet we still have buildings where the owners and the managers are too cheap and too greedy to spend the money it takes to thoroughly repair the elevators Instead, they will repair a little part of the elevator They will not do the job the way it should be done Now would this happen if this building was in Fort Lee or Montclair or Essex Fells. No It happens because it's in Newark, because we are poor, and because people think that we will not do anything about it

We're approaching the winter and we have buildings where women get up in the morning and have to heat water in order to wash their kids and send them to school Is that right? You have buildings where there are people sitting with their coats on all day because there is no heat? You have buildings where the heat comes on at 10 and goes off at four What are you supposed to do the rest of the time. That is not living Those are not decent safe conditions

HUD is required by law to provide decent, safe, affordable housing. We have to make those laws enforced We have to make HUD accountable Another thing. We have to make sure that existing laws are enforced. There is only one housing inspector for all the HUD buildings in NJ

We have a tremendous lack of enforcement power and part of that is the budget. That is one of the things I am asking this panel to look at is the budget for code enforcement, and for HUD, to be able to do inspections, to answer code violations. This year the city of Newark slashed its code enforcement personnel. We were not there at those budget hearings. We should have all been there That is one of the areas we need to be involved in. We can't let them cut those inspectors because otherwise we can't enforce the law

And yet we still have buildings where the owners and the managers are too cheap and too greedy to spend the money it takes to repair, to thoroughly repair the elevators.

It happens because it's in Newark, because we are poor, and because people think that we will not do anything about it.

I'm going to give the panel a list of our 24 proposals to HUD These are points that we are trying to get HUD to adopt. They involve things like doing inspections of buildings when the landlord isn't expecting them

We have buildings where women get up in the morning and have to heat water in order to wash their kids and send them to school.

Most of the time the landlord knows HUD is coming and he takes a can of paint and paints the lobby, and maybe he shows him an apartment that is already prepared, one of his buddies, and that's it. We are asking for surprise inspections This is something that should have been done years ago We are asking for more time for tenants' to review a rent increase application

Do you know that a tenant can hardly get their hands on the budget for their own building? They need to be able to look at it The reason it is important is this. Managers claim that they make a lot of expenditures. They submit all these phony bills, and I will say that they are phony, because we've proven this in some buildings.

There are buildings where management claims that they have four maintenance people, but the tenants who live there know there's only one. So taxpayers are losing money, HUD gets this phony report, and gives tenants a rent increase This is not the way it should work

Residents in the building have to be involved They have to have access to their own budgets in their buildings. This is logical Unless these residents are involved, these buildings will continue to go downhill And I'm not talking about a token involvement They have to be able to approve and evaluate the managers (this is one of our proposals), to evaluate the contractors who are coming there and doing no work, or doing shoddy work, or work that is not solving the problem All of these things are in here

We've given this to Lautenberg, and we've met with someone from Washington about this. And we are going to be asking you all to help us move these things forward

The last thing I want to bring to your attention is that we have another very important issue Rent control, which is not as good as it should be of course, and has many loopholes, is under attack again.

Unless these residents are involved, these buildings will continue to go downhill.

Rent control, which is not as good as it should be of course, and has many loopholes, is under attack again.

In Elizabeth, they are trying to get a referendum to vote it out Right now at least you have a cap, at least they can only go up 4% or 6% if you're in a rent controlled building. In Elizabeth and Bloomfield, they are all attacking the rent control law This headline is Rent Control Defeated in Massachusetts This is a sign of things to come in Newark, unless we can organize, look at the law, and make sure they don't try to pull this here

Let's talk about our next steps

These are the reports that were done at the last hearings We are going to write a report about this *Housing Speak Out*

We are going to be taking this report to City Hall When we do that we want everybody to go We will be having a press conference, a demonstration, a rally, something to highlight the fact that these are important issues We wanted you to hear them You weren't at our hearing, but we are here And you're not going to ignore us. We are going to continue to move forward Because if we don't make housing a priority, we will be out in the street along with the other 32,000 homeless people

Rich: *We've heard a lot of very good information about tenants, about homeless people, about public housing, about private housing, private housing that's related to HUD, the relationship of housing to jobs. We talked about the three levels of accountability With city government, we talked about rent control and code enforcement. With state government, we talked about temporary rental assistance and the Housing & Jobs Initiative With federal government, we talked about funding for housing and homelessness. We talked about issues of safety and public security, community organizing, political organizing We talked the fact that we need to make this a political fight, not just a community fight, getting out the vote, not just registering the vote. Every election you should be getting out to vote. These guys look at who turns out to vote. And finally, I'd like to let our panelists say a few words.*

Sister Cathy Daly,
Catholic Community Services:

I don't really have much to say except thank you It's such an honor to be at this forum You are the heroes and heroines of our city I thank you for taking the time to come this morning and tell your story

You are the heroes and heroines of our city.

Just one thing. I pass the Lincoln Motel every day and I know Mr Berger is getting over $2,000 a month for those rooms for homeless families, and I know, and you know, so many of you with $2,000 a month could find a very nice apartment anywhere in Essex County Thank you for your time

Michaelene Loughlin,
Seton Hall University
Center For Public Service:

I also want to thank you for participating. I was very honored and pleased to listen to what everyone had to say here today

...it is very encouraging to know there is a hope, and that hope is in this room.

Margaret Mead once said never underestimate the power of a few committed people. And as I think, as we're depressed from the election, from the political rhetoric aimed against poor people and racial minorities, that is becoming the common language of political discussion, that it is very encouraging to know there is a hope, and that hope is in this room, as far as a small group of very committed people

Jeannette Page-Hawkins,
Newark Emergency Services For Families:

I don't have a lot to add to what was said by you today. I'd just like to leave you with a little food for thought. A lot of words have been thrown out here today, such as accountability, action, organization

your efforts will safeguard our children, so let this be a call for action.

But one thing that you have to remember, your efforts will safeguard our children, so let this be a call for action

David Stephens,
Urban League Of Essex County:

To be honest I don't know exactly what I expected when I walked in this morning. But I know for right now I've been blown away by most of the testimony. There's a lot of experience and there's a lot of knowledge that's been gone through today

And there is a lot we can learn and a lot we can all do. The Urban League is committed to working with African Americans to achieve economic and social equality. The best way to do it is standing up for what you believe is right, and essentially working toward the common good

The best way to do it is standing up for what up for what you believe is right, and essentially working toward the common good.

Rich: *Frederick Douglas said that the limits of tyrants are prescribed only by the limits of those whom they would oppress. In other words if you take 5 kacks, you will get 5 kicks. We have been kicked around for too long in many different areas such as housing, jobs and quality of life, and we have to stop it. That's what organizing is all about. That's why we're here today. This is one step in the process that will continue. I know I will see all of you again as part of that process. Thank you all for being here today.*

Draft - NEW JERSEY HOUSING & JOBS INITIATIVE

c/o Affordable Housing Network of New Jersey
Arnold Cohen, 609-393-3752

New Jersey Housing Facts

State of the Crisis

Decent, safe and affordable housing is a basic human need that should be available to everyone And yet:

* One third of all New Jersey households are living in housing that is either excessively expensive overcrowded or substandard Especially hard hit are the elderly, people with disabilities and low-income families, even many families with two working parents find it difficult to find housing they can afford.

* One in ten New Jersey households pay over half their income for housing.

* Over 50,000 New Jerseyans are homeless

* Only 30% of all low and moderate income households in New Jersey that need housing assistance of some sort actually receive it. For example, the waiting list for the DCA-administered Section 8 Program is over 24,000, and the state has stopped accepting applications.

* Most counties report that the need for affordable permanent housing remains acute

Losing Ground

* Thousands of units of affordable housing were lost in New Jersey between 1980 and 1990

* Only 2,000 new affordable units are being produced annually meeting only about a tenth of the need as identified by the Department of Community Affairs.

* State government appropriates only about $14 million per year for the development of housing that s affordable ess than one tenth of one percent of the Fiscal Year 1995 budget.

* In 1980 the median sales price of a home in New Jersey was $61 400 By 1994, New Jersey's median sales price had risen to $146 000, pricing many families out of homeownership

* The economic gap between the rich and the poor in the US is the widest since the Depression New Jersey lost more than 250,000 jobs between 1988 and 1991

More Affordable Housing Will Help The Economy

* Building or rehabilitating affordable housing boosts the economy by creating new jobs. Every $1 million invested in housing construction generates about 30 new jobs

* Providing decent, affordable housing reduces state expenditures in the areas of health care, education, criminal justice, etc.

* Community-based non-profit groups in New Jersey have produced over 8,000 affordable units, generating tax ratables, construction jobs and preserving neighborhoods. They are capable of producing much more given expanded resources.

Draft - NEW JERSEY HOUSING & JOBS INITIATIVE

The Housing and Jobs Initiative is a comprehensive plan designed to start addressing New Jersey's housing problems at the core. The initiative calls for a **$500 million investment by the State over three years which will:**

1. Create or preserve 12,000 units of affordable housing for rental and home ownership, including a significant number of barrier-free units. About half of the 12,000 units produced will involve the rehabilitation of vacant, foreclosed or abandoned properties.

$80 million per year in new production money will assist a total of 4,000 additional units per year at an average subsidy of $20,000/unit, tripling the current affordable housing production rate. These funds will supplement the State's successful Balanced Housing Program, which is severely underfunded.

2. Create a state-funded rental assistance program to assist over 6,000 very low income families and individuals per year including people who are homeless, living in emergency housing or have special needs.

The rental assistance program will provide $30 million per year to assist low income households. At an average of $400/unit/month this program could assist approximately 6,250 households per year. Thirty percent of the funds will be targeted for project-based rental assistance for newly constructed or rehabilitated units.

3. Help over 6,000 low and moderate income households purchase their first home.

This program will provide $15 million per year to help low and moderate income families purchase their first home by providing closing cost and downpayment assistance at an average of $7,000 per unit. Over 2,100 households per year will receive assistance The money will be provided in the form of soft second mortgages that will be repaid upon sale of the house or once the principal is paid off. Funds currently allocated for this purpose are inadequate

4. Initiate an economic development program to create 2,600 jobs a year and job training programs as part of community development strategies in lower income neighborhoods.

This $40 million a year program will help capitalize creative job creation ventures in low income areas of the state where overall community development strategies are being developed and implemented Funds will be available for planning, for equity to start or expand business or manufacturing ventures, and for the design and operation of job training programs linked to specific employment opportunities.

5. Support the expansion of the non-profit housing and community development sector in order to triple the number of affordable housing units it produces yearly.

This $1 65 million per year program will enable approximately 33 non-profit housing development corporations to expand their production capability by providing them with an average of $50,000 per year for three years to augment staff and access professional resources 26 of New Jersey's *more than 120 non-profit housing groups now receive such support from the State's Performance* Grant Program, and have been able to significantly build their development capacity

Draft - NEW JERSEY HOUSING & JOBS INITIATIVE

How can we pay for it?

There are a number of ways to either redirect funds currently budgeted or raise new money to pay for the Housing and Jobs Initiative. Possibilities include:

Redirecting funds from current programs (to be determined)

General obligation bond issue

State housing tax credit

Modify realty transfer fee

Direct appropriation

Escheat (unclaimed personal property) fund

Luxury tax (on items to be determined)

Check off on income tax

State developer fee

Landlord registration fee

Rental tax on summer homes

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Impact of the Housing and Jobs Initiative in New Jersey

The Housing and Jobs Initiative will have far reaching benefits for state residents Over three years this $500 million investment will create jobs, save New Jersey millions of dollars and inject billions into the state's economy in the following ways:

* Based on the experience of the state's Balanced Housing Program, investing $240 million to develop or preserve affordable housing in New Jersey will bring in at least $1 2 billion more in financing from other public and private sources, generating a total of $1.44 billion for housing production. As construction takes place, the purchase of building materials, supplies, appliances, and the many other products necessary in home construction will feed approximately $460 million into the state's economy In addition, this investment in housing production will generate new sales tax revenues estimated at $27 million. Local property tax rolls will be increased by $24 million a year, or $72 million over three years, once the new units are completed

* Providing rental assistance to over 6,000 families and individuals per year who are "at risk" of homelessness or currently living in emergency housing could save over $90 million from the cost of placement in motels and shelters, as well as untold millions currently being spent on health care, criminal justice, and other related costs.

* The Housing and Jobs Initiative will create more than 9,000 jobs each year for three years through the housing production program, and another 2,600 jobs annually through the economic development program targeting lower income neighborhoods Assuming a quarter of the jobs created will go to people currently unemployed, this will save the state $24 million in unemployment costs, and put $42 7 million into the economy through increased spending by people with jobs and payment of state income taxes.

HUD TENANTS' COALITION

FOCUS: **The prevention of problems identified in the HUD TENANTS' COALITION SURVEY**

A. **Survey Update: Report from the Buildings**

B. **Prevention: What steps will HUD take to PREVENT such conditions from occurring in the future?**

Action Proposals:

1) **Surprise inspections at buildings, quarterly.**

2) **At least one week advance notice to Tenants Association before inspections.**

3) **More frequent (quarterly) visits to buildings to meet with tenants; monthly contact with tenant leaders in buildings.**

4) **Required training, screening, and evaluation by tenants for managers. Training should include "resident relations" with input in training forma from resident leaders.**

5) **Require yearly written evaluations, by management and tenants (involving the Tenants Association) and reviewed by HUD, of contracts for services in the buildings, such as security contracts, and denial of contract renewal if services are not satisfactory to the majority.**

6) **A standard procedure for keeping waiting lists, and more HUD oversight of this process; a copy of waiting lists (kept current) should be available for inspection by tenants.**

7) **Publicize success stories. HUD should arrange for owners who ARE able to run their buildings efficiently and affordably to share their techniques with other Owners and residents through workshops, tours, printed materials, etc.**

C. Financial Accountability: How will HUD work with building residents to help guard against wasteful or fraudulent use of tax dollars?

Action Proposals:

1) **Extend 30-day review period on rent increase proposals to give tenants sufficient time to review.**

2) **Quick and effective penalties imposed by HUD, including denial of rent increases, for Owners and Managers with recurring problems.**

3) **Access for Tenant Associations to the building budget on a regular basis (quarterly), not just at rent increase times.**

D. Communication: How will HUD work with residents to increase communication between those involved so that future problems can be prevented?

Action Proposals:

1) **Provide a list of HUD Managerial persons responsible for each complex.**

2) **Provide an updated list of Owners/Managers for each complex (include phone and address).**

3) **Schedule regular meetings with HUD TENANTS' COALITION (with NJHFMA and HUD representatives present).**

4) **Provide list of who is responsible for NJHFMA buildings.**

5) **Explore other mechanisms for better communication among all parties.**

1994 Survey Of Building Conditions
In Hud-Assisted Properties
Newark, N.J.

This survey of conditions in privately-owned HUD-assisted properties in Newark, N.J. was conducted during the fall of 1994. There were tenant responses from the following eleven properties: Garden Spires, Aspen Riverpark, 2 West Kinney St., 129 Chancellor Ave., Hallmark House, 195 W. Market St., Douglass Harrison Apartments, 6 Pomona Ave., Zion Towers, the Colonades, and Essex Plaza Apartments.

The following is a summary of the results:

A) Bathroom

* 39% of respondents said they had cracked or missing ceramic tiles.
* 30% said they had leaks around the sink, bathtub or toilet.
* 25% said they had leaks in the ceilings or walls.
* 17% said they had dripping or leaking faucets.
* 22% said that their water was not hot.
* 15% said that water pressure was too low.

B) Kitchen

* 34% said that cabinets, drawers, or counter tops need repair.
* 15% said they had dripping or leaking faucets.
* 24% said they had leaks around or below the sink.
* 14% said their refrigerator doesn't work properly.
* 15% said they smell gas.
* 20% said the stove or oven is broken in some way.
* 11% said their water was not hot enough.
* 15% said their water pressure was too low.

C) Common Areas

* 38% said that their dirty halls, elevators & stairways.
* 22% said that their elevators don't work.
* 25% said that there are lights out in their hallways.
* 16% said that there are holes in the walls.
* 22% said that there is garbage in the hallways.

D) Floors

* 9% said there were broken, or missing kitchen tiles.
* 19% said there are holes in the floors.

E) Walls

* 25% said there were cracks in walls, or holes in walls.
* 5% said they had missing baseboards.

G) Windows

* 22% said they had broken or cracked glass.
* 13% said their windows leak when it rains.
* 34% said their windows won't open or close all the way.
* 54% said they had screens missing.

H) Miscellaneous

* 11% said they had circuit breakers tripping, or other electrical problems.
* 27% said they had doors with holes, or improperly working locks, or warped doors which do not shut properly.
* 76% said they had mice, cockroaches or other pests.
* 29% said the apartments are not painted.
* 24% said the office staff or employees have a disrespectful attitude.
* 31% said the buildings are dangerous.
* 54% said that repairs are not done quickly.
* 41% said that repairs are not done well.
* 49% said drugs were sold in their building.
* 57% said that there is loitering or hanging out in the buildings.

****

PART II: The second side of the survey asked several more open-ended questions.

1) What was the most serious problem in the apartment or building, and had the manager been informed. This is a sample of the responses; many of these were repeated numerous times:

- There is cracked paint in every room. All rooms need paint.
- A leaking toilet.
- I am withholding rent because my TV was damaged during repairs.
- Poor plumbing.
- No security in the parking lot.
- Broken garbage compactor.
- "Drugs sold in and around the building. This has been reported for 3 1/2 years." (Drugs was mentioned many times).
- "No air conditioning"
- Hole in the ceiling, no refrigerator, mice and drugs.
- Serious leaks through the air conditioning unit, possible asbestos contamination, reported 2 years ago.
- No screens, a dangerous apartment.
- "Everything done halfway or less"
- Elevators inoperative and not synchronized.
- Problems reported but not corrected..
- Low voltage lights.
- Roaches, mice rats. (mentioned numerous times)
- Repairs not done in a timely fashion. All problems have been discussed with management.

- Theft of kids bicycles, cars vandalized, dirty hallways, vandalism, problems with elevators. All of this has been reported.
- Office staff's attitude is terrible. Can't get anything fixed. Nasty-dirty hallways.
- Elevator door slams on people. Drugs are really bad.
- Hole in the bedroom, leaking.
- Doorbells don't work
- No storm windows and screens don't close all the way, apartment cold in winter since 1987.
- Apartment hasn't been painted since 1987.
- Windows in bedroom let snow in through them.
- Insufficient heat, we have to use ovens to heat.
- No superintendent in the buildings.
- Witch hunt for evictions and court actions, whoever the manager doesn't like or whoever speaks out.
- Dirty garbage room.
- Too high rate for parking, vandalized cars.
- Inadequate heat.
- Electricity - light bulbs explode and have to be changed constantly.
- No security, anyone can enter the building.
- Broken shades, windows hard to open, roaches, pilot light going on and off, gas smells.
- Broken stove, reported to manager.
- Floor and wall tiles, window shades and screen missing - reported to manager 3 or 4 months ago.
- Rain comes in bathroom..
- Kitchen sink leaks, storm windows broken.
- Front door locks not working. Dirty furniture in basement, washer and driers leak all over floors, lights in hallways not working.
- Buildings and ground services are inadequate and unsatisfactory.
- I've been complaining about my heat since I moved in but still nothing has been done. There are no screens in my windows and no locks on them at all. The windows need to be fixed soon because winter is just about here again. I have very high gas and electric bills in the winter time that I have to pay when I'm supposed to be getting free heat.
- My apartment was broken into two times in 1992. I have asked the manager for bars on my window but he said no. I was very afraid to leave my house to go anywhere.

2) Did you fill out last year's survey, and were the improvements made? Few respondents had fill out last year's survey.

3) Only 1 person reported a problem with recertification.

4) Over half of those who responded said that there was no Truth in Renting Act or Registration Statement (with the owner's name, emergency numbers to contact, mortgage holders, etc) as required by law, hanging in their building.

Low-Income Housing Programs Under Attack

Housing programs are under attack from a variety of sources. HUD, under intense pressure from the White House, has proposed a drastic "Reinvention Blueprint" that would consolidate 60 federal programs into three block grants, "end public housing as we know it," and turn FHA into a government-owned corporation. Congressional action is still unclear, although the HUD plan will probably open the door to an even more drastic overhaul, and deeper cuts.

Public Housing: Perhaps the most alarming feature of the HUD reinvention plan is the treatment of public housing. All PHA's except the 104 officially 'troubled' ones would be 'deregulated.' HUD would convert most assistance to PHA's into three or five year vouchers. The plan would end restrictions on the demolition or sale of public housing, likely resulting in huge losses in the only permanently available stock of affordable housing in the country for very low-income families. At the same time, there is no guarantee that vouchers will be funded at a significant level. Moreover, previous experience suggests that housing market discrimination and other barriers to mobility will frustrate choices for low-income families. In sum, the plan creates the risk of massive homelessness.

Housing Production Programs: The 'Reinvention Blueprint' would consolidate HOME, homeless programs, and elderly and disabled housing programs into a block grant to localities --with states and cities likely sharing the funds. The new 'Affordable Housing Fund' raises a variety of concerns. Conditions regarding income targeting, citizen participation, non-profit access, and special needs populations are not spelled out.

Community Opportunity Fund: HUD's plan would consolidate CDBG and its Section 108 loan guarantees, Economic Development Initiative (EDI), Youthbuild, and Empowerment Zones in a new block grant called the Community Opportunity Fund (COF). The program raises two critical concerns. First, a considerable portion of CDBG funds are currently used for affordable housing. It's unclear whether that will continue to be the case for the COF. Second, the COF would probably be funded at roughly $4 - 5 billion, compared to $1 - 2 billion for the Affordable Housing Fund. Yet, the track record of economic development projects, in contrast to affordable housing, is that they often don't serve or employ low-income people.

Materials Available: An outline of the HUD plan, and an analysis of two of the block grants --the Affordable Housing Fund and the Community Opportunity Fund-- are available on HandsNet (Housing & Community Development/Housing Policy/HUD). The text of the 'Reinvention Blueprint,' a CCC op-ed on HUD's public housing proposals, and an excellent critique by the National Housing Law Project are available through us by calling Sheree Stansbury at (202) 342-0567.

Big Cuts in HUD Funding Possible for Fiscal Year 1995

House Republicans have stated their intent to move a severe rescissions bill in February, after the President submits his budget to Congress on February 6th. Rescissions are cuts in already appropriated funds –in this case, funds for Fiscal Year 1995. Cuts in a broad array of low-income programs, including the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), education, crime prevention, and housing programs are likely.

Action Needed: Contact your Senators and Representatives and urge them to (1) preserve the stock of permanently affordable public and assisted housing; (2) ensure that any block grants for affordable housing or economic development are targeted to very low- and low-income families, provide for citizen participation, and include non-profit set-asides.

For further information contact: Charlotte B. Sobel (housing and appropriations) at (202) 342-0594; Othello Poulard (public housing) at (202) 342-0519; or Ed Gramlich (community and economic development) at (202) 342-0567.

HUD TENANTS COALITION

RESIDENTS OF NEWARK
YOU MAY BE HOMELESS
BEFORE THE YEAR 2000
ACT NOW, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

Recently on January 7, 1995, the HUD Tenants Coalition met with top Housing and Urban Development Officials to address concerns of tenants in HUD-Assisted properties. The meeting allowed tenants in several multi-family dwellings in the city of Newark as well as several municipalities in the state of New York to vocalize problems in their buildings, from rent increase procedures, Safety and lack of security in buildings, lease and occupancy issues to Title VI Grants and federally proposed initiatives for the restructuring of the Housing and Urban Development Government Agency.

Presently there are **three Initiatives** being proposed by the Federal HUD office for the year 2002 that may drastically effect the availability of affordable housing for MULTI-DWELLING RESIDENTS living in the city of Newark and through out the state. In brief those **initiatives are:**

1- All local government monies that went toward housing are being combined into one proposal, including (202) monies for housing the elderly. Thus monies from different housing grants, i.e., H.O.M.E. or Community Development Block Grant will all be going to the local governments, (municipalities) to manage.

2- It is proposed that all monies previously spent for public and HUD assisted housing- Section Eight, will all go into one block grant to be governed by individual states and local governments within. The plan is to decentralize HUD, by eliminating the federal government's involvement in regulating and creating housing laws.

HUD Initiatives continued:
Thus State and local governments will have the sole responsibility for establishing rules, regulations and policy for multi-family dwellings.

3- Lastly HUD is proposing to restructure the debts for owners of State and Federal Housing Agency properties down to the market values of the properties. Once this is done HUD will no longer control rents, but rather rents will be determined based on the market.

IMPLICATIONS:
Without the federal government supervising the activities of state and local government, there will be no recourse for tenants if the state and local governments fail to institute laws and regulations that will ensure affordable and fair housing practices by owners.

Local Rent control ordinances may become MORE WEAKER, NOT BE ENFORCED OR TOTALLY ELIMINATED. Thus allowing owners to raise rents to rates that are not affordable to the average wage earner in the city.

The development of A LARGER HOMELESS POPULATION, middle income, working and low income families, may come about. Increase homelessness due to lack of affordable housing.

DON'T WAIT AND BECOME A VICTIM, ACT NOW! MAKE YOUR LOCAL POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES AND CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVE WORK FOR YOU!

WRITE TO CONGRESSMAN DONALD PAYNE AND LET HIM KNOW OF YOUR CONCERN AS A TENANT. SPEAK WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO FIND OUT HOW THEY PLAN TO ENSURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, OF YOUR CHOICE, IN THE CITY OF NEWARK.

WRITE NOW AND LET YOUR CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVE KNOW THAT YOU VOTE, AND DO NOT AGREE WITH THE DECENTRALIZATION OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

Prepared by Cynthia D. Pullen
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